world's largest church (in Seoul, Korea) tells you how to overcome difficulty and how to experience God daily. Much of the book deals with building right relationships. It is a bargain at 4.95 pp.

Hardly anyone in our time has been read more seriously than C. S. Lewis. One of his longtime friends and students, Kathryn Lindskoog, has written *C. S. Lewis: Mere Christian*, which explains Lewis' views on God, nature, reality, death, heaven, hell, prayer, pain, miracles, etc., etc. You will find this a provocative book. 6.95 pp.

Two books by Howard A. Snyder would be especially appreciated by our readers, for they read like a modern Alexander Campbell. *The Problem of Wine Skins* and *The Community of the King*, at 5.50 each pp. deal with nature of the church in a technological age, always in reference to the Scriptures.

READERS' EXCHANGE

I still have every single copy of your *Restoration Review*, even reviewing them occasionally. God bless your work! — *Virginia Adams, Las Cruces, NM.*

(Those who would like a sampling of what we wrote in the 60's and 70's can receive 18 back issues, randomly selected, for only 3.00. — *Ed.*.)

It is discouraging at times when you see your brothers and sisters in the "party" so closed minded. You want to open their eyes spiritually, but I realize only God can do that. He did with me. Sometimes I am disappointed in myself for wanting to bind on them the freedom I have experienced. — *Joe and Sharon Littlejohn, Wynne, Ar.*

I am reading your history and weep a little, rejoice a little, grow a little and become more and more encouraged. — *Dick Robinson, Cascais, Portugal*

I am pleased to find the spirit of unity taking hold in the whole body of Christ. Just yesterday I had the opportunity to share with a Church of Christ minister in Sweetwater. We had a beautiful, loving time and we resolved it would not be the last time. I can remember when neither of us would have even considered the other a Christian. Praise the Lord, Jesus is moving among His people and tearing down the walls. — *Nathan Hopson, Sweetwater, Tx.*

Though I grew up in Independent congregations, my wife and I have been worshipping with a noninstrumental CofC, trying to build bridges of love and trust. I have also this year spoken for Disciples churches, not to mention a Baptist and a Presbyterian. The Lord has convinced us that followers of Christ, like Christ, love and accept all Christians. We are trying to learn to put this into practice. — *Chris Davis, Richmond, Va.*

More than 2,000 copies of *The Stone-Campbell Movement*, by the editor of this journal, have already sold, and the reactions from those who have read it are enthusiastic. Our history is at last readable and interesting, they are saying. If you have not yet ordered a copy for your family, we urge you to do so at once. 21.95 postpaid.

It is still possible for you to join us on the trip to Israel, Nov. 8-18, which costs 1695.00 from New York. Since the time is short you should call us at 817-382-2063. You must have a passport but no visa.

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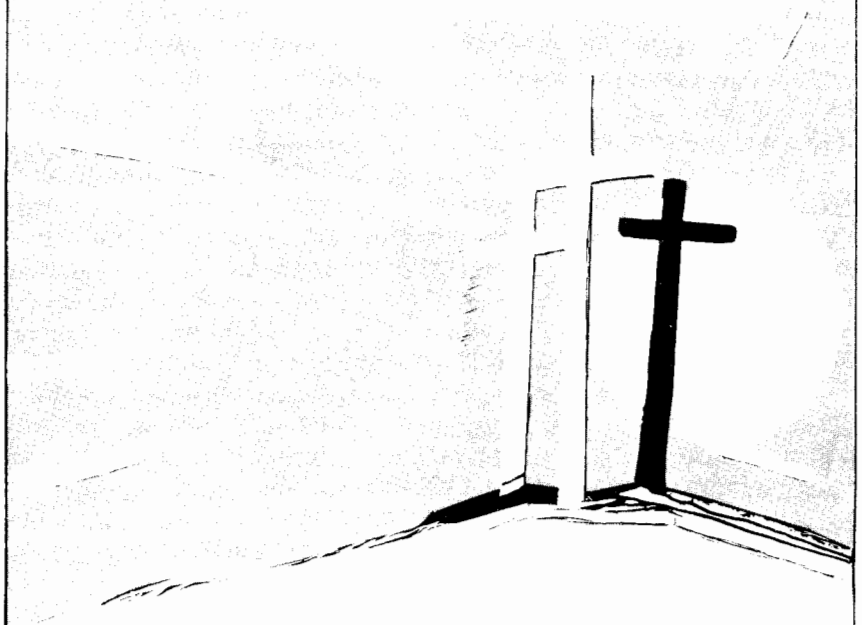
RESTORATION REVIEW



If we live at the same level of affluence as other people who have our level of income, we are probably giving away too little. Obstacles to charity include greed for luxurious living, greed for money itself, fear of financial insecurity and showy pride.

— *C. S. Lewis*

Vol. 24, No. 8 **Leroy Garrett, Editor** **October 1982**

Jesus Today. . .

WHAT THE LORD'S PRAYER MEANS TO US?

It is remarkable that the only thing Jesus' disciples asked him to teach them was how to pray. *Lord, teach us to pray* was an unlikely request. Being already devout men, one would suppose they knew how to pray, just as we suppose that we know how. Being with Jesus as they were must have made the difference. When they saw and heard him pray they realized they knew little or nothing about prayer. I say *saw* as well as heard, for they might not have always heard the Lord's most intimate fellowship with the Father, for he had a way of withdrawing to himself for prayer.

Anyway, the disciples insofar as we know never asked Jesus to teach them how to preach, or even how to heal or to start congregations. They may have figured if they could but learn to pray, *really* pray, that would take care of everything else. It is a lesson to be learned by the disciples of the 20th century as well. To think of the problems our world faces in the 1980's. If we could but learn to pray!

The prayer that Jesus taught his disciples in answer to their question is even more unlikely than the question was. It is one more reason why the Christ story cannot be sheer invention, for no inventor could come up with such a question and such an answer. Jesus responded to a very weighty theological question with but a handful of words!

The significance of this prayer for us is not so much the details that Jesus includes in the petitions to the Father, but that it provides us with principles of prayer for all times and occasions. By principles I mean basics or fundamentals that always apply or nearly always apply, while the details may differ. We sometimes err by being concerned with details to the neglect of principles. If the basics are ours, if we think in terms of fundamentals, then the details will take care of themselves.

When Jesus says "This is how you should pray," he is saying something like *Here are the principles which will apply to all your prayers.* We all know that a prayer need not be only a few sentences or that it always be a recitation of this prototype that Jesus gave in the long ago. And yet the recitation of this prayer has always been very meaningful to the church through the ages. The most illiterate believer can be expected to know the Lord's prayer or at least part of it. Indeed, the whole world honors it as part of the great literature of the ages. Ouida and I, oftentimes with

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visitors at our table, say this prayer in unison.

As short as it is, it still has a substantial problem in textual criticism, for the last petition, that glorious line *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever* is not in the two oldest and most reliable manuscripts and therefore almost certainly not a part of the original prayer that Jesus taught. You will notice that the modern versions usually delete it or relegate it to a footnote. But that line is very ancient and has made its way into the great music of the church as well as the ritual, and it is generally accepted by Protestant churches as Scripture. Some of us feel that we have hardly recited the Lord's prayer if that line is omitted, and yet we must admit that Jesus probably did not include it.

This illustrates how the church has determined what is Scripture. It was of course the church that determined that the Lord's prayer (or the chronicles of Matthew and Luke) is Scripture. And by long centuries of meaningful usage the church has come to consider *an addition* to that prayer as Scripture. It is, after all, biblical, being found in 1 Chron. 29:11, or something very similar to it, long before the Lord's prayer. Some well-meaning scribe added it to what Jesus prayed and it stuck, making its way into enough manuscripts to find a place in the great King James translation, which was all it needed.

That majestic added line is something like the eunuch's confession in Acts 8:37: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Again you will find it omitted in most modern versions and for similar reasons. But even our own elegant J. W. McGarvey insisted it was a "justifiable emendation," which should say something to those who have a rigid view on the nature of Scripture. No one was a greater defender of the Bible than McGarvey, and he was "one of us," and yet he allowed that tampering with Scripture, actually adding to it, was sometimes justified.

So, for those who may be interested in my view of Scripture, I accept the last line of the Lord's prayer as Scripture, though I concede that Jesus probably did not include it. Just as I accept Matthew's qualification for divorce, "except for the cause of fornication," as Scripture even though it is very likely that Jesus did not make that exception, as per witness Mark and Luke.

I have said this to remind the reader that whichever way we turn in the Bible, even to something as short and as innocent as the Lord's prayer, we are faced with problems of textual criticism and the nature of Scripture. We should face such problems forthrightly, for we have nothing to fear insofar as the biblical message is concerned.

The first principle of prayer in the Lord's prayer is the principle of adoration. Our Lord adored the heavenly Father and he is teaching us to do so. Our prayers should begin with praise, in adoration of the creator of heaven and earth, before we start making requests. *Our heavenly Father,*

hallowed by thy name! is exalted praise of him who has made us his own children. 1 Pet. 1:17 sees significance in the very experience of invoking the great God of heaven as *Father*. "If you call him Father, think how you ought to live!" Peter is saying. So there is also a principle of transcendence here in that when we say "Our Father who art in heaven" we are saying that we do not really belong to this world, that our parentage is in heaven.

This lesson may be the most important to be learned from our Lord's instruction: *that when we pray we first praise the God of heaven.* To say, *Hallowed by thy name* is to say that the Father is holy and glorious. We may do this in many different ways, as in the Psalms.

The second petition is really more of the same, for we are praising God for the great truth that his will is always done in heaven and perhaps throughout the entire universe, *except on earth.* And so we are to pray, and it is to be our will, that the Father will be honored and obeyed on earth as he is in heaven. *Thy kingdom come!* is another way of uttering this praise. William Barclay is probably right in seeing this as a Hebrew parallelism, where one line means the same as the next. *Thy kingdom come* thus means *thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

Those who suppose that we can't pray that line since the kingdom has already come in the form of the church, and this included Alexander Campbell, must see that the kingdom is referred to in Scripture as both realized and as in anticipation. It was present ("If I cast out demons by the finger of God, then is the kingdom of God among you"), but it was also future ("Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"). Just as with salvation: it is both now and future.

Jesus is not only praying for the glorious manifestaton of God's reign upon earth, or teaching us to, for it is also a way of praising God.

So the first half of the Lord's prayer is praise and adoration, and this is most relevant as to how we should pray today. When we start out praying by asking for this and that and the other, we need to sit at Jesus' feet and ask *Lord, teach us to pray.* He is telling us that as we learn to praise God in prayer it will then be time to pray for other things.

Another principle is that we are to realize our complete dependence on God — for our daily necessities, for the forgiveness of sins, for security from evil. Jesus places our daily bread first among these petitions, even before the forgiveness of sins. But that figures, for first of all we have to live. And we are dependent upon the Father for the necessities. Jesus wants us to sense that, *deeply.* It is an antidote for our greed and selfishness, and for our pride, to realize that every bite of food is from God's hand, the one who is our Father. It is enough to ask God for necessities, certainly not for luxuries.

We see still another principle in the community spirit of this prayer. It is *our* and *us,* not I and me. The principle of community is basic to the

Christian faith, for the church is the community of heaven. Together we are in exile. And so we invoke the God of heaven as *our* Father and we implore him to lead *us* not into temptation.

There is also what I like to call the "as" principle, which we often find in Scripture: forgive us our sins *as* we forgive others. Jesus is teaching us that it is the forgiving person that finds forgiveness from God, and that we will be forgiven *as* we forgive others. This does not mean, of course, that we are forgiven *because* we forgive others, for that would be law rather than grace. It means that if we really believe God has forgiven us, we will forgive others. If we are unforgiving, then something is wrong with our relationship with the Father.

The most difficult petition to understand is the last one: *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (or the evil one).* It is odd that Jesus would have us ask the Father not to do what God clearly does not do anyhow, and that is to lead his children into temptation. Jas. 1:13 clearly states that we are not to say that we are tempted of God, for "God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one." The apostle goes on to explain that temptation is the result of our own lust. Why should we then pray to God that he lead us not into temptation. And that is the way it reads. It does not say *Do not allow us to be led into temptation.*

Again Barclay may be right when he says we must not be too theological in handling this problem, for while it is true that God does not himself tempt us he does rule over our lives in a world filled with all sorts of difficulties and temptations. This petition brings home to us the stark reality of our evil world, and that without the Father we are completely helpless. He is our Guardian in this world and he can save us from those perils that would be too much for us. So the prayer is saying something like *Go easy with us; don't push us too hard!*

Beside all this there is the spirit of the prayer which shows that prayer must always be with humility and perservance, and that we should pray for others more than for ourselves. Moreover we are to pray (and live) as if the eyes of God are always upon us.The great secret of life according to Jesus is to see ourselves always as God's children. This frees us from any concern about what people may think of us, even if they think of us as "a great person of prayer." Jesus teaches us that only one thing really matters, that we *be* the children of the heavenly Father. — *the Editor*

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THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST AT THE WORLD'S FAIR

Our folk in the East Tennessee area are to be commended for moving in where the action is. From an ample booth in a popular pavilion the message of the Churches of Christ has been heard, seen, and read by many thousands who visited the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville. Featuring the theme "Energy for Life: God's Love . . .Person to Person," the Church of Christ exhibit provides for a video tape and computer terminal for those interested in Bible questions and answers, along with numerous pieces of literature, such as a book entitled *Introducing the Churches of Christ*, a pamphlet called *The Churches of Christ. . .Who Are These People?,"* and such magazines as *20th Century Christian* and *Up Reach*, the latter being a publication of the Herald of Truth radio and television ministry.

Housed in the only island exhibit at the Fair, the Technology and Lifestyle Pavilion, the church's exhibit also allows the visitor to enroll in a Bible correspondence course, to receive a daily Bible reading guide, or to request special prayers. Some visits become personal and some are being baptized.

Some folk only talk about doing something when great opportunities come along, while others do them. We commend the brethren that are responsible for doing something significant. With the cost running around a million dollars we all know this was no easy task.

Along with my commendation, for whatever that may be worth, I want to raise some questions about the literature that was passed out, which was a significant part of the ministry. If the world is asked to judge us by what we print, we should be willing to scrutinize ourselves.

Our exhibit at the Fair reminds me once more how church-oriented we are rather than grace-oriented, gospel-oriented, or Christ-oriented.

The visitor might see an attractive logo and an impressive motto that points to God's power or energy, but even a superficial look will reveal that our exhibit is a *church* thing. We are advertising a particular denomination, one that many folk know little or nothing about. So we are informing them of our church. That may well be one's first impression.Perhaps this is all right, if indeed we are in the denominationalizing business. And perhaps we are. But I suggest that we not play games with ourselves as to what we are really doing.

Could we have raised a million dollars for such an exhibit if it had featured only Jesus Christ and him crucified, in some colorful and creative ways of course, and with no reference to Churches of Christ? Perhaps so. Most of our rank and file folk want to be non-sectarian; they only need non-sectarian leaders. Many of the leaders also desire to be non-sectarian, but they fear each other.

A "mere Christian" exhibit, to quote C. S. Lewis, would really

impress the Fair visitors. Many would inquire as to the identity of the sponsors, of course, but our loving response would be: *We are simply Christians who want to tell the world about Jesus.* That would really blow people's minds and it would drive all sectarians at the Fair right up the wall!

But the Churches of Christ could hardly do that, for we are not simply Christians. We are Church of Christ-Christians, just as others are Baptist-Christians or Presbyterian-Christians. We are a denomination right along with the others, and we are making that clear by our format at the World's Fair. If we are not a denomination, which simply means to be named or denominated so as to be set apart from others, why is everything at the Fair marked *Church of Christ?*

Not only do we feature a denominational name but a party line as well. The literature is replete with Church of Christisms that preserve the old cliches that have long since grown threadbare. Joe R. Barnett prepared a booklet especially for the Fair, *The Churches of Christ. . .Who Are These People?* Joe can be excused for misrepresenting the size of Churches of Christ to the Fair visitors, though he should know that there are only about 1,206,700 of us in 12,706 congregations instead of 2½ to 3 million in 20,000 congregations as he reported. And that includes *all* Churches of Christ, including those that have no fellowship with those who sponsored the exhibit.

If Joe gave the correct figures for the "mainline" Church of Christ, he could name only 965,439 in 10,165 churches. So those who sponsored the exhibit are barely one-third as numerous as their literature represents. But, as I say, this is excusable in that the research that reveals our declining membership is of recent date. Like all denominations with shrinking numbers, we are reluctant to accept the facts that have been clearly revealed in our leading papers. All denominations have a penchant for inflating figures, one device being never to drop anyone from the roles.

It is less excusable when we are sectarian in what we pass out to inquirers of the Christian faith.

This booklet especially prepared for the World's Fair preserves such illusions as the five items of worship, the virtures of acappella singing, and the claim that the Church of Christ is not a denomination. With an opportunity to witness to the world of our faith, we talk about acappella music!

The booklet reads: "The five items of worship observed by the first-century church were singing, praying, preaching, giving, and eating the Lord's Supper."

In the light of Scripture this statement is without foundation, and in terms of biblical scholarship completely indefensible. The New Testament does not once refer to an "item of worship" and not one of the five things

listed is ever referred to as worship. What the booklet is really saying is that Churches of Christ interpret the New Testament in this way, and in a very selective way it must be admitted, for others would find fasting, love-feasting, tongues, foot washing, confessions, praising, sharing, etc. as "items" of worship. We are told that preaching is an item of worship. How about studying to preach, or translating the Bible to be studied, or publishing the Bible? Are these also not worship? How about visiting the sick, feeding the hungrey, clothing the naked? Items of worship, indeed. Such talk is the language of a sect. And the world as well as the church universal are not likely to take it very seriously.

What does a thirsting soul at the World's Fair care about whether we sing acappella or "items of worship" or the lame claim that we are not a denomination?

We are a people of bold claims, that's for sure. The booklet dares to number the members of the undenominational church of Christ in Nashville: 40,000 members in 135 congregations. Inflated figures or not, this is the number of Christians in Nashville, for the booklet makes it clear that "the saved" and "the church of Christ" are the same. Now if the booklet is referring to a distinct group of Christians in Nashville known as Churches of Christ, and not to the whole of *the church* in Nashville, then the numbering is acceptable. I take it that Joe Barnett is giving us statistics on a denomination in Nashville known as Churches of Christ, while denying it to be a denomination.

It must impress other churches as odd that we make such a claim. All churches are denominations except us! Barnett says we are not a denomination because we wear Christ's name and that "church of Christ" is not used as a denominational designation. It would be interesting for him to tell us how we would have to use "church of Christ" so as to give it denominational designation, if we are not now doing so.

It is a strange logic. The Church of God wears a biblical name, but we consider them a denomination. Even the Christian Churches, who are "Christians only," are a denomination. All churches are except Chruches of Christ! It must be so. That is the message at the World's Fair.

Another handout, also prepared for the Fair, is *The Church: God's Loving Family.* As I have said, our message in Knoxville is *church.* This attractive, colorful brochure of eight pages refers to the church no less than 60 times. But, after all, the church *is* God's family, and the brochure could be most appropriate, emphasizing as it does "the church as God's loving family." But if that conjures up any ecumenical expectations in you Church of Christ folk that have come to see the beauty of the church catholic, you can forget it insofar as our exhibit at the World's Fair is concerned.

The booklet makes it clear who "God's Loving Family" is. "The

church is important," it tells the reader, "provided it is the church that existed 1,900 years ago." It goes on to say that Churches of Christ are "seeking to restore the New Testament church in purpose, doctrine, worship, organization, life, and joy" (I wasn't expecting that last word — a digression!!) The booklet makes it clear that the Church of Christ is that restored church, God's loving family, for it is "Like the New Testament church," it worships and is organized "according to the New Testament pattern."

Restorationism, patternism, and primitivism are fallacies that are slow dying, but slowly the light will break that the Church of Christ cannot be formed after "the New Testament pattern" for the simple reason that there is no such pattern. The workers at the Fair must be careful lest some visitor ask, "Which of the several different Churches of Christ is it that is restored after the New Testament pattern, for they all make that claim and they have no fellowship with each other?" They might also ask, "Which church is it in the New Testament that you are using for a pattern?"

A more basic question could be even more embarrassing: *If the New Testament is the pattern, how is it that the church of Jesus Christ was a living reality for a full generation before the pattern was ever written?*

Well, I have complained enough. I intend to be helpful. I want us to *think* and stop our game-playing and cease presuming that other Christians are not our equals. The equality and acceptance of *all* God's family is my plea, and I am sick and tired of our moronic assumption that we and only we are that family. Long enough have we numbered the Christians in a given city. Only God knows those that are his. Even John on the isle of Patmos looking into heaven could not number the Church of Christ in heaven (Rev. 7:9). Dare we try to number the Church of God on earth or to determine its parameters, for it is made up of multitudes "from every nation and all tribes and peoples, and tongues."

Those of us who belong to that part of the church universal known as Churches of Christ and Christian Churches have much to offer. We have a great heritage in Jesus Christ and the Scriptures. And I suggest we start by cooperating with other believers in an exhibit at the next World's Fair that will give glory to *Jesus Christ as the Light of the world.* A truly non-sectarian exhibit that would advertise no church but would point in a glorious way to him whom God made both Lord and Christ. It would be a challenge for our artists, poets, and playwrights.

Our dark, suffering world would take notice. —*the Editor*

The world's greatest mission field is not India or China, but the modern church. — *Elton Trueblood*

OAK HILL CHAPEL

(In view of the foregoing analysis of the Churches of Christ at the World's Fair this description of a congregation in St. Louis will stand in interesting contrast, and it will serve to point up some of the things I had in mind in my criticism. Note, for example, the place of "church." The letter that follows, a personal one to the editor from Carl Ketcherside, one of the leaders at Oak Hill, tells still more about this community of believers. — *the Editor*)

What is it? What kind of people attend there? What do they believe? How do they live? We would like to answer some of these questions for you. The sign in front of the building carries the slogan: "A Meeting Place For Christians." And Oak Hill Chapel is just that. It is the intention to make any Christian feel at home in whatever condition he may be. Lonely, forsaken, depressed, forgotten, driven out — he will find a welcome awaiting!

The folk at Oak Hill Chapel are not so much a church as they are a family — the family of God. There are babies, there are schoolchildren, there are teen-agers, there are young married people and there are older folk. All are loved, respected and received because Christ loves us all. There are university-trained men and women, there are others who had little opportunity for formal education — but all recognize a deep need for help from without in coping with this world and its problems. All know the value of a helping hand in times of doubt and despair.

They believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. That is their only creed. There is no other written statement to which men must subscribe. The Bible is revered as the message of God *from* heaven. The New Covenant Scriptures constitute their guidebook on the road *to* heaven. Each person is encouraged to read it for himself. The deductions and opinions that he derives from his study do not constitute tests of fellowship. He is asked to retain them as private and not seek to bind them upon others further than they can personally agree.

Members of the fellowship feel that baptism is a validation of one's faith and commitment to Jesus. It is always performed by immersion, in which one is buried in the likeness of the death of Jesus and raised in the likeness of His resurrection. By this act one crucifies the world unto himself. The Lord's Supper is observed every Sunday as a visible token of the fellowship which exists. These two ordinances are the only ones that are kept. The first is an introduction into the fellowship; the second a constant reminder of the fellowship which is ours with each other and with the Lord.

We are saddened to admit that sometimes we do not measure up to

our own standards for living. We try, but the problems of the world are as great for us as they are for anyone else. We tend to become angry when we ought not, to be neglectful when we ought to be constant, and to fail ourselves and others. We thank God that whatever state we are in our Father knows. We can ask Him for forgiveness, crave His pardon, and He will respond. We are deeply appreciative of His marvelous grace and thankful for the Holy Spirit, who acts as our companion and help, even when we grieve Him. We are often in prayer.

We are resolved that we will help humanity with its problems. We regularly send every month to those in need, at home and abroad. We never ask the religious inclination of one who is in need, because we act out of compassion, following the example of our Lord. Racial, ethnic, and other circumstances of birth do not enter into consideration. The only thing that counts is the need of the one whom we assist. We are firmly resolved to resist every sectarian tendency and to be God's people only.

Oak Hill Chapel has but one enemy — Satan. It is our intention to regard every child of God on earth as our brother or sister, to treat them as such and to receive them as God has received us. We wrestle not agains flesh and blood. So we invite all of you who have been driven before the lash of this world to come and find a haven of rest among us. We exist for the good we can do and for no other reason.

There is no clergyman at Oak Hill Chapel. You will listen to men who go to work every day just as you do, but who love Jesus more than anyone or anything else. They will edify you, uplift you, help you, and their testimonies to the faith will strengthen you for the problems you must face. We exist for those who need us. If you'd like to work for Jesus come and visit us. It would be such a thrill to meet you. Commit yourself to His cause.

Oak Hill Chapel
4068 Parker Avenue (at Oak Hill)
Saint Louis, Missouri 63116

Dear Leroy:

I am delighted with your report of your reception at Macrorie and I wish you could have known Grannie's husband, T. W. Banting. He was quite a case. Everyone in the area knew Wilber Banting. He was as solid as a rock. The older Tweedie folk also were something else. They came from a place Nell and I had visited in Scotland and they used to like to talk about it. Their brogue was as pronounced as when they left their native land. You could slice it with a knife like tomatoes, and sometimes it was almost as sharp.

When Elgin called and told me they were in a strait for a speaker I immediately told him to lose no more sleep, that you would come and they

would like you. I did not know at the time you might be ill but I give thanks to the Father that you survived. Praise His name for your going.

We are in the process of getting ready to cast all on one toss of the dice. We have decided to opt for a satellite congregation in the real inner city where we can help the weak and weary. We will maintain Oak Hill Chapel as a force behind the outpost and will have two congregations. But we have also decided that starting the first of the New Year we will invite a different speaker to address us every Sunday night. We are having a doctor, a preacher from the Wesleyan Church, a young man from the Apostolic Christian faith, an eminent Disciples of Christ man, one from the Chinese Gospel Church, a man from the Halfway House, a Presbyterian missionary, a Chinese Baptist. We are in for a good time. Please pray for us. I have the first three months filled up and we are starting on the fourth month with a representative of the Slavic Gospel Association. God be with you, keep you, make His face to shine upon you. Yours and HIS,

Carl

MADELYN'S WAYWARD SON

Those who were reading this journal back in 1974 (the December issue to be exact) may recall an essay I did on Mrs. Madelyn O'Hair, the prominent atheist who took the issue of school prayer all the way to the Supreme Court and won. The essay included a letter that I sent to a Dallas radio station who had featured Mrs. O'Hair. The station was under attack for "sponsoring atheism" and for allowing the likes of "that woman atheist" to grind her ax.

While defending the station for allowing all controversial views into the marketplace of ideas, I was writing to correct a misrepresentation on the part of Mrs. O'Hair, which was that our founding fathers, particularly Thomas Paine and our first five presidents, were atheists. I gave documentation that our founding fathers *did* believe in a Supreme Being and that Thomas Paine started a society in France designed to oppose atheism. I sent a copy of the letter to Mrs. O'Hair, and I was pleased that the station read their copy to their listening audience.

That is all I have had to say about "the most hated woman in America," for I do not consider her or her work all that big a deal. Her corny atheism is not even a modest threat. It is atheism of a different sort, a much more subtle atheism, that flourishes in such high places as schools,

the media, universities, government, and even the church, that concerns me. It could be called by different names, such as humanism, secularism, existentialism, and even consumerism, but that is another subject.

Madelyn is back in our hearts here at 1201 Windsor Dr. in Denton, Texas by way of a book written by her son, William J. Murray, who now resides in Dallas, after a very stormy career with his mother, as the book reveals. I read *My Life Without God* to Ouida in bed, and some nights it kept us rather late. Ouida was like a little girl listening to bedtime stories. "Let's find out what happens next," she would say, and as obedient husbands ought, I read on into the night, all 252 pages in only a few installments. I didn't know just how to handle all the expletives, which the publishers resolved by giving only the first letter, followed by dashes. When I sometimes filled in the blanks for Ouida, so as not to disturb the flow of a well-structured sentence, she would respond with, "Oh, my goodness! Wasn't she foul-mouthed!"

So that let's you know that the book is rated PG or something like that, but it really takes you into the real world out there where demons lurk, a world of dope, drink, wild parties, greed, crime, lust, vindictiveness and all the rest. The son "told it all" on both his mother and himself, including lots of fornicating, drunkenness, fraud, and even an attempt to defect to Russia. Ouida was astonished that any man would reveal so much wantonness in his own life. But the son never managed to equal the prodigality of the mother, who is pictured as a cheap dilettante that would do or say anything for money or publicity. Mrs. O'Hair is indeed both vile and vicious, according to her son, and his hatred for her is apparent throughout the book, albeit it is a hatred that eventually turns to pity.

The point of marketing the book is that the son has become a believer in God, even a Christian, and now has an agency of his own for Christian work. Ouida sees the son as driven to religion by a factious mother who sought to entrap him in her own selfish and unrealistic goals. When but a lad in school, he was used by his mother as the plaintiff in the famous "prayers in public schools" case that is still a hot issue, though presumably settled by the Supreme Court. It was dramatic when that same person, now a man in his mid 30's, went before the President only this year bearing a petition to restore prayers to the schools by constitutional amendment.

The mother's response to her son's transformation is to say that that is one more way for an atheist to make money off the duped Christians, by feigning to be one. But the son comes across as sincere, as a man who turned to God because he was left with nothing else.

In reading the book one can see what happens to a child in a home broken by malice and bickering. It is a grave injustice when it happens even to one child. Bill Murray, who refers to himself now and again as a

bastard child, was subjected to constant abuse from his mother, as well as sharing a home where there was incessant feuding. Madelyn must have hated her own father, cursing and berating him as she did. One day when she left for work she cursed her father and told him she wished he were dead. That very day he fell dead. When she heard the news she told young Bill to get on the phone and find an undertaker that will come "pick up the stiff." That was Madelyn O'Hair, who talks of the virtues of atheism and puts herself in the same class with the elegant Thomas Jefferson.

When I asked Ouida what I should say to our readers about this book, she said that she thought it was very interesting, which may be reason enough for reading any book, but she added that its interest grew out of things with which we have some acquaintance: the antics of Madelyn O'Hair. She also sees the book as a reflection of man's vulnerability: his lust for power, pleasure, money and influence, even to the extent of tampering with Deity himself. But Ouida does not see that the book would have any influence with an atheist, for even atheists would repudiate the likes of Madelyn O'Hair, a woman greatly to be pitied.

But if a book would cause a good woman to keep her husband up into the wee hours, what more needs to be said? We have decided to stock the book, and Ouida will send you a copy for 12.95, postpaid. That woman will do nearly anything for money! — *the Editor*

QUESTIONS FROM MISSOURI

A reader from the "Show Me" state has asked some questions that might interest others of you. While I am not exactly "the Answer Man," I have made some response.

1. *Is there really a pattern in the New Testament for a New Testament church to follow today?*

Does this not depend on what one means by *pattern?* If one looks at Webster's dictionary, he sees that the term is not all that easily defined, for even an abridged Webster's will have several definitions. If by pattern one means "a model or plan used as a guide,' to quote Webster (such as directions for building a model airplane?), the answer has to be no, for the New Testament clearly is not that kind of book. This is especially evident when Webster adds "a predictable and prescribed route" (such as a travel bureau's markings on a Texas highway map that directs you across the Lone Star state?), for the New Testament is more descriptive than it is prescriptive. It certainly does not prescribe anything like a highway map, or a recipe for a lemon meringue pie.

Nor is the New Testament all that predictable, which Webster also sees as the meaning of pattern. Starting with the church's birthday on Pentecost in Acts 2, a reader of the New Testament might predict that all subsequent churches started by the apostles would be, more or less, carbon copies of each other, but this obviously is not the case. Modern sects are sufficiently "patterned" by their creeds, written and unwritten, that their churches are remarkably identical. But such is not the case with the New Testament churches. The church at Antioch was considerably different from the one in Jerusalem, and the Corinthian church was hardly identical to the one at Thessalonica or Ephesus.

Prescription and predictability require more detailed information than we have in the New Testament. Recently Ouida and I did something entirely new for us when we installed a ceiling fan over our king size bed (Ah, what luxuries we moderns have!) It was all very predictable, for it was certain that we would have a ceiling fan like the one pictured on the carton if we followed the directions that accompanied the unassembled hardware. We not only had directions; we had drawings and diagrams. We had what Webster calls a *pattern.* Still we had a hard time of it, with Ouida doing her thing in the bedroom while I worked with wires in the attic. Finally, we had it all installed, a perfect reproduction of what one sees on the carton, fresh from Ward's. Then came the moment of truth. Ouida turned the switch but the blades did not move, not even one revolution. So we started over, following our instructions step by step. Back in the attic I discovered a disconneted wire, so we were home at last, though not exactly home free. We had our fan, for we faithfully followed the prescribed and predictable pattern.

Is building a church from the New Testament like that? Hardly. When we hear of native Africans starting a Church of Christ, is it predictable that it will be like the Church of Christ at 6th and Izzard in Little Rock? The truth is that such churches are often quite different, which may be just as well. When a missionary points to the New Testament as "the pattern," he must be careful to interpret that pattern according to his own biases, lest the churches turn out to be quite diverse and hardly likenesses of the church that sent him. Except of course in a general way.

But if by *pattern* we mean that the New Testament in a very significant way is the norm, standard, guide, authority for the church today, apart from a "fixed pattern" mentality, then the answer is yes. While no church in the Scriptures can be our model, or even all of them combined, there still emerges a distinct norm of what the Body of Christ is to be. When one of the ancient councils formulated that great creedal line, *We believe in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church,* it drew upon what might be called the biblical pattern, for the Bible makes it clear that God's church has all four of those qualities, even if no church in the New

Testament was all that exemplary.

And we know considerable about how sinners became Christians and what it means to live a Christian life, and, allowing for some diversity, we know something of the life, government, work, and mission of the New Testament churches. But this is where it gets difficult, for we cannot be sure that the Lord intended for the churches throughout the centuries to be exactly like the primitive ones, assuming that such were possible. Maybe it is better to think of our mission as doing for our generation what they did for theirs, but not necessarily in exactly the same way. Their experience, and the New Covenant Scriptures which they eventually produced, stand always as our first frame of reference. They are authoritative for us.

So, *yes*, the New Testament may be looked upon as our model or pattern, provided it is responsibly interpreted, free of parochial and sectarian implications. This is expecially true in that the whole of the New Testament milieu points to Jesus Christ, who is first and last our *living* pattern.

2. *What is your definition of the term "Restoration Movement"?*

Again we are using a term that means different things to different people. In the history I wrote on *The Stone-Campbell Movement* I called attention to a vast amount of research done by a Harvard professor on "the Radical Reformation," which concerns those sects that emerged in protest to the Protestant Reformation. While Luther and Zwingli sought to reform the existing church, these radical sects, such as the Anabaptists, insisted that the church was too corrupt to be reformed, and that, in fact, the true church had ceased to exist. So they worked for a "restoration"or a "restitution" of the New Testament church, believing that they and they alone were the one, true church of the Bible. They were therefore as opposed to the denominations that emerged from the Reformation as they were to Roman Catholicism. All were false churches except their own. Thus they have come to be called the *radical* part of the Reformation. They subsequently divided into numerous feuding sects, each believing that it and it alone is the true church. Some of these sects today are the Amish and the Mennonites.

Prof. George H. Williams of Harvard concluded his study of these people by saying in part: "So widespread was restoration (restitutionism) as the sixteenth-century version of primitivism that it may be said to be one of the marks of the Radical Reformation, over against the (institutional, ethical, and party dogmatic) Reformation on the Magisterial side."

There was thus one historian of that period named Leonard Verduin who wrote a book on the restoration movement, which of course was long before the beginning of the Stone-Campbell Movement.

So, if we refer to *the* Restoration Movement I suppose we should go back to the Anabaptists as the authors of such a movement. But we must

recognize that many restorationist sects (one historian has counted 176!) have begun since the days of the Anabaptist, each of course claiming to be the true church. And who can believe that the New Testament is a "pattern" in this sense, allowing for 176 different versions of the true church?

Even if we refer to our own heritage as the *American* Restoration Movement we do not escape confusion, for there are such sects as the Mormons who claim to be the restored church of Jesus Christ. But the greatest difficulty is that the term "the Restoration Movement" as applied to ourselves is but of recent origin and was not used by our pioneers. I will not say that the term does not appear at all in the annals of our first generation pioneers, but since I have not yet found a single instance of its use I can only conclude that it must be used very rarely if at all.

They did occasionally use the term restoration by itself, especially Campbell's "a restoration of the ancient order" and sometimes "a restoration of primitive Christianity," but if you ever find Campbell referring to a restoration of *the church*, I would be pleased to have the reference. Campbell and the others nearly always referred to themselves as *reformers*, not restorers, and their Movement as "the reformation" or "this reformation." Campbell thus designated his efforts as "the New Reformation," which placed him within the reformed tradition of Martin Luther, not within the restorationist tradition of the Anabaptists. When the Campbells thus spoke of "the Church of Christ on earth," they were saying the church existed in their day and had always existed since Pentecost, even if it were in need of reform. Their mission therefore was to restore *to* the church things that were wanting, not the church itself.

But, in response to the question at hand, I am afraid we are stuck with the term Restoration Movement, and I am pragmatic enough to accept that as a fact and make the most of it. We *can* use the term in a meaningful way, as referring to renewal. Carl Ketcherside has wisely defined restoration as "renewal through recovery of the apostolic proclamation in its power and purpose." That is great because it implies an ongoing reformation rather than the presumption that we have restored the New Testament church "in name, worship, doctrine, and practice," and that we are thus the true restored church to the exclusion of every one else.

3. *How should the independent Christian Church have handled the Diciples of Christ issues?*

Again, those who read my *The Stone-Campbell Movement* will see that I dealt with the division between the independents and the Disciples with some detail. And I found some heroes, one being P. H. Welshimer, who, though strongly opposed to some of the Disciple doings, never drew lines of fellowship, insisting that "We can disagree without being disagreeable." He attended the conventions of both sides, serving as an

officer of both. He invited Disciples to his pulpit in Canton, Ohio, the largest church of the entire Movement at the time, and he freely spoke at such places as Bethany College. While he chaired the committee that created the North American Christian Convention, it was not his intention that it be of separatist influence and certainly not the beginning of a separate church.

So, I think the conservative brethren (who eventually became the Christian Church) should have been of Welshimer's peacemaking persuasion and not made "the issues" a test of fellowship, as they eventually did under the leadership of the *Christian Standard*. Open division could thus have been avoided for a time, with conservatives and liberals accepting each other within the same fellowship. But it is evident that the Disciples would have eventually "left" anyway, in the sense of restructuring themselves into an official denomination, as they have done, leaving the independents to go their own way.

I suppose I am only saying that there *could* have been less sin and divisiveness in the separation that was inevitable.

4. *Should a break ever take place?*

If we are indeed the Body of Christ, we must heed Paul's gripping question, *Is Christ divided?* And we must accept the fact that division is a sin (period). So, if by "break" one means dividing the Body of Christ, the answer has to be no. Jude 19 tells us that those who cause divisions and separate themselves are sensual and devoid of the Spirit.

But few things are absolute and without exception. If a people are with a church where they can no longer serve under the lordship of Christ because of severe oppressive actions and attitudes, it would be appropriate for them to leave. Some of our more open churches started not because of a factious attitude, but because they were persuaded they could serve the Lord better in a new beginning, and they sought to maintain peace with the older church.

So a "break" does not necessarily imply the divisive spirit, which is always wrong. — *the Editor*

OUR CHANGING WORLD

The Maxey Christian Church in Maxey, Ga., a tiny church in a tiny town, cooperated with a tiny Baptist church in the next town in a vacation Bible school for the kids. It all went well. When children grow up seeing that kind of acceptance between believers they are certain to have a better image of the church. Why can't we all do more of this kind of thing?

In a recent issue of *Lamplighter* (which you can receive by writing to Box 527, Plano, Tx. 75074), David Reagan summarizes the four views of end time, which are historic premillennialism, a-millennialism, post-millennialism, and modern premillennialism (or dispensationalism). Once he notes their differences, he emphasizes their commonality: "All agree that Jesus is coming back for His saints, and all agree that those saints will spend eternity in the presence of God. What they agree on is far more important than what they disagree on. Regardless of viewpoint, let us unite our voices in crying, Marantha!"

While I knew of this story, I felt it improper to publicize it, but now that I see it is told in two different church bulletins, I will go ahead. The Pleasant Run Church of Christ in Lancaster, Tx. has had a split, with some 12 people leaving to start another work. The issue: *preaching on grace.* This is especially significant in that the folk involved are of the non-cooperative, so-called "anti" persuasion. The Pleasant Run church, with its dynamic young minister, Vance Drum, is really turned on to grace as an effort to escape from a debilitating legalism. Those who left, after protesting to the elders, objected to this emphasis. The church still has about 150 members, and the attendance is growing. A sister congregation, complaining at the direction taken by Pleasant Run, referred to the matter as "that grace kick." As I have suggested time and again in this journal, watch for dramatic changes on our right flank, and this includes the schools of preaching.

During a recent weekend in Houston I visited with leaders of the South Main Church of Christ in South Houston, a non-Sunday School church that supports the Houston Bible Training Work, as well as missions in Malawi, Africa. While this church adamantly stands by its convictions, it has a beautiful attitude toward other believers. Spending the night with B. and Ruth Shelburne, missionaries to Malawi for 19 years, I heard stories about our 1700 congregations in that nation of less than three million, the "our" in this instance referring to all persuasion of the Stone-Campbell movement. Some 500 of these tiny assemblies are the result of the efforts of non-SS churches. The Shelburnes report that these 1700 churches accept and cooperate with each other as believers ought. It is believed by some churchmen today that Africa will one day be the greatest Christian nations on earth.

BOOK NOTES

Those who would like attractive booklets to slip into your letters or to hand to friends might try these, most of them by John R. W. Stott: *Culture and the Bible; Evangelism: Why and How; Personal Evangelism; Becoming a Christian; Being a Christian; The Authority of the Bible; Hope for a Troubled World; Practical Criticism* (Giving it and Taking it); *Who is my Neighbor?; Mormonism; What is Christianity?; Interpreting the Bible; Spiritual Dryness; Jesus, Zoroaster, Buddha, Socrates, Muhammad.* These are substantial booklets of about 40 pages each, colorful, well-written, and small envelope size. They are 60 cents each when you order five or more, including postage.

We have a new supply of what may be the best study on the subject, *Interpreting Revelation* by Merrill Tenney, at 8.50 postpaid. He presents difficult and complicated issues in a simple and intelligent manner.

Memoirs of Alexander Campbell is still in print but may not be for long. It is the most resourceful book on our history. 19.95 pp.

For only 2.25 we will send you *The Fat Is In Your Head*, written by one who knows how to take it off. You might want to send one to a friend, anonymously.

William Neil has a second book on *More Difficult Sayings of Jesus*, 31 in all, including Casting Pearls Before Swine, Cursing a Fig Tree, and The Salt of the Earth. 6.50 postpaid. The first volume is still available at 1.95 pp., entitled *Difficult Sayings of Jesus.* We highly recommend them both.

If the article in this issue on "Madalyn's Wayward Son" leads you to purchase *My Life Without God* by William J. Murray, the price is 12.95, postpaid.

If you are interested in history, you will want *A Documentary History of Religion in America,* by one of our leading historians, Edwin S. Gaustad. This is the first of two volumes, up to the Civil War. By a study of 200 documents produced by American churches the author takes one through the back roads of religion in America, two of which are from the Stone-Campbell Movement. 532 pages, 16.95 pp.

The Meaning of the Millennium by R. G. Clouse, which clearly sets forth four views of the millennium, continues to be popular reading. The price is now 6.50 postpaid.

In *Solving Life's Problems* the pastor of the